



# Family Newsletter

Office of the Staff Judge Advocate  
Fort Dix, New Jersey



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## Preamble

Since September 11, 2001, the Fort Dix JAG family has increased by 50 percent. As thousands of soldiers mobilized and demobilized at Fort Dix, our mission increased dramatically. During the past year, seven reserve soldiers volunteered to help us with this huge increase.

Last October, Major Wallace Vitez, Major Matt Adams, Major Steve Fromm, and Sergeant First Class Rickey Benson joined our JAG family. This past June our family increased in size again as Major Joe Giblin, Captain Paul Nieves, and Staff Sergeant Patrick Uket came on board. Without these dedicated citizen-soldiers, we would simply not have been able to offer the high quality of legal services that Fort Dix has come to expect.

Since September 11, 2001 our civilian employees have also been called upon to make greater sacrifices as our mission changed and expanded. Without their hard work on our core missions of claims, criminal law, legal

assistance, contract law and administrative law, our office would have foundered.

I would like to thank all of these dedicated people for the exceptional job they have done during the past year. I would also like to thank the families of the Fort Dix JAG team for supporting us and making our sacrifices possible.

This newsletter is designed to provide information to the families of the Fort Dix legal team. If you have any comments on this newsletter, please send them to me at [peter.masterton@dix.army.mil](mailto:peter.masterton@dix.army.mil).

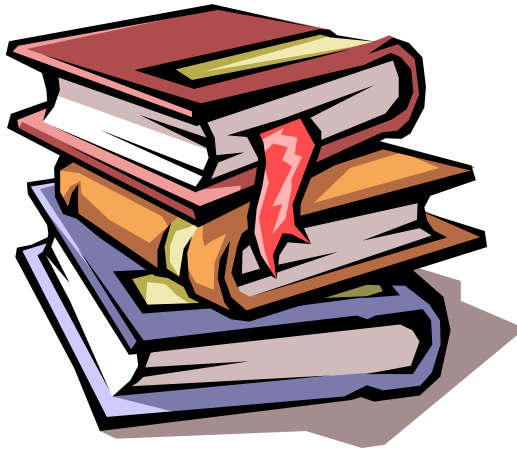
LTC Pete Masterton  
Fort Dix Staff Judge  
Advocate



## **New Online VA Benefits Guide Available**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has made its comprehensive benefits guide available for free on the Internet at <http://www.va.gov/pubaff/fedben/Fedben.pdf>. The guide is a 118-page handbook describing benefits provided by the VA and an overview of programs and services for veterans provided by other federal agencies.

VA officials estimate most of America's 25 million veterans qualify for at least some VA benefits, but many are unaware of their entitlements. This handbook includes a listing of toll-free numbers, World Wide Web information resources, and VA facilities.



Most veterans are eligible for healthcare and burial benefits. Many are also eligible for home loan guarantees, educational assistance, vocational rehabilitation, life insurance, and compensation for service-connected disabilities.

This guide explains how to access many of these benefits online. For instance, it provides a Web address and

instructions for enrolling via the Internet into the VA healthcare system. The book describes in detail the priority for care and services available. The Montgomery GI Bill and other education benefits are explained in depth. Burial benefits and employment service are also covered, as are rate charts for the various forms of compensation VA provides.

The book can be purchased through the Government Printing Office for \$5 for U.S.-based customers and \$6.25 for those overseas by calling toll-free (866) 512-1800. By providing it online the VA hopes to make the information available to more veterans.

## **FEHB Premiums For Mobilized DOD Employees**

The Deputy Secretary of Defense has established a new policy permitting federal civilian employees who are mobilized for contingency operations to recoup payment of their Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) premiums. The Department of Defense will now pay the employee's share of these premiums, in addition to the government's share, for any covered employee who is called to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

The policy also provides the authority to make retroactive payments to eligible employees who were called to active duty on or after 8 December 1995. This includes citizen-soldiers called to active duty in support of operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, the 1998 Iraqi crisis, and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

## **Army Career and Alumni Program**

The Army Career and Alumni Program (ACAP) helps soldiers, DA civilians and their family members transition out of the Army and into new civilian careers. ACAP is designed to help soldiers, civilians, and their families make informed decisions about remaining in the military and what to do after leaving the military.

Soldiers separating or retiring from the Army, who have served at least 180 days of active duty, are eligible to use ACAP. Family members of transitioning soldiers and DA civilians are also eligible and encouraged to participate in ACAP free of charge.

The first step in the ACAP process is a needs assessment counseling to identify immediate and long-range career goals. Based on the counseling, an Individual Transition Plan is developed to help ensure you receive the necessary assistance.

ACAP will provide job search training. A professional counselor will help you translate your skills into civilian terms. You'll also have access to references on the national job market and be able to attend seminars and workshops on job search strategies.

For more information, visit the ACAP Web site at [www.acap.army.mil](http://www.acap.army.mil).

## **RC Families and TRICARE**

Members of the Army Reserve and Army National Guard are eligible for TRICARE when they are mobilized for 30 days or more. The extent of the

benefits depends on the length of the mobilization.

Family members of soldiers who are ordered to active duty for 30 days or more but less than 179 days are eligible to enroll in TRICARE Standard and TRICARE Extra. These programs are similar to civilian medical insurance plans.



Family members of soldiers who are ordered to active duty for 179 days or more are eligible for TRICARE Standard, TRICARE Extra, and TRICARE Prime. TRICARE Prime is similar to a medical treatment plan and authorizes free visits to a military or civilian health care facility.

For more information, visit the TRICARE Web site at [www.tricare.osd.mil](http://www.tricare.osd.mil).

## **Commissary Privileges**

Families of Army Reserve and National Guard soldiers ordered to active duty are entitled to full time shopping privileges at all DoD commissaries. This policy is not new, but many reserve families are not aware of this benefit.

Eligible family members can shop at the commissary by showing their ID card

and a set of their sponsor's orders verifying active duty status. Shoppers save an average of more than 30 percent of their purchases at the commissary.

More information about the commissary benefit is available at [www.commissaries.com](http://www.commissaries.com).

### **Golden Corral Military Appreciation Night**

Golden Corral is sponsoring its second annual Military Appreciation Night on Veterans Day, November 11, 2002. This event is designed to honor America's military personnel for their patriotism, love of country and willingness to serve.

Military Appreciation Night will be held from 5-9 p.m. on Monday, November 11th. Every Golden Corral restaurant will offer a free dine-in dinner buffet to all veterans and active duty military personnel. All that is required to receive the free dine-in buffet is that military guests state their military status when coming through the ordering line the night of the event. Golden Corrals are located in New York, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. To find a location near you, Click on their Web site at [www.goldencorral.com/RestaurantFinder.asp](http://www.goldencorral.com/RestaurantFinder.asp).

